

UKDI launches new phase of fast paced innovation competition

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UK Defence Innovation (UKDI) has launched Phase 3 (Cycle 7) of Innovation Support to Operations - looking for tech that can be developed fast and scaled at pace.

- UKDI has launched Phase 3 (Cycle 7) of Innovation Support to Operations
- Funded by the Ministry of Defence
- Cycle 7 closes on 12 May 2026 at 12:00 Midday (BST)

This competition is seeking cost competitive, innovative solutions across seven new challenge areas. Proposals are expected to request up to £350,000 (excluding VAT). Proposals must not exceed £1,000,000 (excluding VAT) and several proposals may be funded.

Our aim is simple: deliver useful technology into service faster than our adversaries.

What the competition is seeking:

UKDI is looking for solutions that can be demonstrated quickly, manufactured at scale, and delivered within around 12 months. Projects must reach Technology Readiness Level 6 (TRL 6) within six months.

The seven challenge areas are:

- **Counter-UAS interceptor sensors:**

Sensor solutions for high-speed counter-UAS (Unmanned Aircraft System) interceptors engaging targets at combined closing speeds of up to Mach 1.

- **One-way attack UAS seeker:**

Novel, passive seeker solutions that are resilient to countermeasures for sub-300kph one-way attack uncrewed aerial systems.

- **UAS survivability:**

Passive survivability solutions, including radar-absorbent materials and multi-spectral decoys.

- **UAS navigation:**

Autonomous navigation systems that operate without Global Navigation Satellite Systems (GNSS), achieving at least 50-metre positional accuracy.

- **Telemetry data:**

Low-probability-of-detection, jam-resistant ways to obtain telemetry data over distances of at least 300km.

- **Maritime autonomous navigation:**

Navigation solutions for unmanned surface vessels operating at up to 60 knots without GNSS.

- **Maritime terminal guidance:**

Automated terminal guidance for unmanned surface vessels using existing onboard hardware.

What makes a strong proposal

UKDI is looking for proposals that:

- demonstrate value for money and competitive unit pricing
- propose innovative or creative technical approaches
- show a credible route to achieving at least TRL 6 within the project duration
- outline how the technology could transition beyond the competition

What UKDI will not fund

This competition will not support:

- paper based studies or literature reviews
- unmodified resubmissions of previous UKDI or DASA bids
- off the shelf solutions without experimental development
- platforms themselves (e.g. Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs), Unmanned Surface Vehicles (USVs) or Unmanned Underwater Vehicles (UUVs))
- proposals unable to achieve at least TRL 6 within the project timeframe

Key dates:

- Submission deadline: 12 May 2026 12:00 midday (BST)
- Projects start: September 2026
- Project length: Six months or less
- Feedback released: August 2026

How to get involved?

Innovators with solutions that could address these challenge areas are encouraged to engage early with their local UKDI Innovation Partner. You can start that conversation by submitting a Contact UKDI Form on the Contact a UKDI Innovation Partner page.

To apply, review the full competition document and submit your proposal via the UKDI Online Submission Service by 12 May 2026.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/ukdi-launches-new-phase-of-fast-past-innovation-competition>